

What is claimed is:

1. A surgical instrument for accessing and illuminating a space within a body of a patient, comprising:

a retractor positionable with the body of the patient and including an inner wall surface defining a working channel therealong; and

a lighting element including at least one wall member and at least one light transmitting element along said at least one wall member, said at least one wall member positionable along said inner wall surface and frictionally engageable with said inner wall surface, said frictional engagement sufficient to maintain a position of said lighting element relative to said retractor.

2. The instrument of claim 1, wherein said at least one light transmitting element includes a plurality of light transmitting elements extending along and spaced about said at least one wall member.

3. The instrument of claim 2, wherein said at least one wall member includes an inner wall member and an outer wall member, said plurality of light transmitting elements being positioned in a passage between said inner wall member and said outer wall member.

4. The instrument of claim 2, wherein said plurality of light transmitting elements comprise optical fibers.

5. The instrument of claim 1, wherein said at least one wall member is bendable to conform to said inner wall surface.

6. The instrument of claim 1, wherein said inner wall surface of said retractor substantially encloses said working channel and said at least one wall member of said lighting element extends about at least 50 percent of said inner wall surface.

7. The instrument of claim 1, wherein said lighting element is movable axially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

8. The instrument of claim 1, wherein said lighting element is movable circumferentially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

9. The instrument of claim 1, wherein said at least one wall member includes a first wall member including a convexly curved surface positionable along said inner wall surface of said retractor and a second wall member including a concavely curved wall surface opposite said convexly curved wall surface.

10. The instrument of claim 9, wherein said first and second wall members extend between opposite lateral edges.

11. The instrument of claim 10, wherein said first and second wall members are coupled to one another along said opposite lateral edges.

12. The instrument of claim 10, wherein said first and second wall members extend along more than 50 percent of said inner wall surface between said opposite lateral edges.

13. The instrument of claim 10, wherein said first and second wall members are comprised of opaque material.

14. The instrument of claim 9, wherein said concavely curved wall surface forms a passage that parallels said working channel.

15. The instrument of claim 1, wherein said retractor is a tube.

16. A surgical instrument for accessing and illuminating a space within a body of a patient, comprising:

a retractor positionable with the body of the patient and including an inner wall surface defining a working channel therealong; and

a lighting element including at least one wall member and at least one light transmitting element along said at least one wall member, said at least one wall member being bendable to conform with said inner wall surface for frictional engagement therewith, said frictional engagement sufficient to maintain a position of said lighting element relative to said retractor.

17. The instrument of claim 16, wherein said at least one light transmitting element includes a plurality of light transmitting elements extending along and spaced about said at least one wall member.

18. The instrument of claim 17, wherein said at least one wall member includes an inner wall member and an outer wall member, said plurality of light transmitting elements being positioned in a passage between said inner wall member and said outer wall member.

19. The instrument of claim 16, wherein said inner wall surface of said retractor substantially encloses said working channel and said at least one wall member of said lighting element extends about at least 50 percent of said inner wall surface.

20. The instrument of claim 16, wherein said lighting element is movable axially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

21. The instrument of claim 16, wherein said lighting element is movable circumferentially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

22. The instrument of claim 16, wherein said at least one wall member includes a first wall member including a convexly curved surface positionable along said inner wall surface of

said retractor and a second wall member including a concavely curved wall surface opposite said convexly curved wall surface.

23. The instrument of claim 22, wherein said first and second wall members extend between opposite lateral edges.

24. The instrument of claim 23, wherein said first and second wall members extend along more than 50 percent of said inner wall surface between said opposite lateral edges.

25. The instrument of claim 16, wherein said retractor is a tube.

26. A surgical instrument for accessing and illuminating a space within a body of a patient, comprising:

a retractor positionable with the body of the patient and including an inner wall surface defining a working channel therealong; and

a lighting element including at least one wall member and at least one light transmitting element along said at least one wall member, said at least one wall member frictionally engageable with said inner wall surface, wherein said lighting element is movable axially along said inner wall surface of said retractor for repositioning said lighting element in said working channel while maintaining frictional engagement with said inner wall surface.

27. The instrument of claim 26, wherein said at least one light transmitting element includes a plurality of light transmitting elements extending along and spaced about said at least one wall member.

28. The instrument of claim 27, wherein said at least one wall member includes an inner wall member and an outer wall member, said plurality of light transmitting elements being positioned in a passage between said inner wall member and said outer wall member.

29. The instrument of claim 26, wherein said inner wall surface of said retractor substantially encloses said working channel and said at least one wall member of said lighting element extends about at least 50 percent of said inner wall surface.

30. The instrument of claim 26, wherein said lighting element is movable axially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

31. The instrument of claim 26, wherein said lighting element is movable circumferentially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

32. The instrument of claim 26, wherein said at least one wall member includes a first wall member including a convexly curved surface positionable along said inner wall surface of

said retractor and a second wall member including a concavely curved wall surface opposite said convexly curved wall surface.

33. The instrument of claim 32, wherein said first and second wall members extend between opposite lateral edges.

34. The instrument of claim 33, wherein said first and second wall members extend along more than 50 percent of said inner wall surface between said opposite lateral edges.

35. The instrument of claim 26, wherein said retractor is a tube.

36. A surgical instrument for accessing and illuminating a space within a body of a patient, comprising:

a retractor positionable with the body of the patient and including an inner wall surface defining a working channel therealong; and

a lighting element including at least one wall member and at least one light transmitting element along said at least one wall member, said at least one wall member frictionally engageable with said inner wall surface, wherein said lighting element is movable circumferentially about said inner wall surface of said retractor for repositioning said lighting element in said working channel while maintaining frictional engagement with said inner wall surface.

37. The instrument of claim 36, wherein said at least one light transmitting element includes a plurality of light transmitting elements extending along and spaced about said at least one wall member.

38. The instrument of claim 37, wherein said at least one wall member includes an inner wall member and an outer wall member, said plurality of light transmitting elements being positioned in a passage between said inner wall member and said outer wall member.

39. The instrument of claim 36, wherein said inner wall surface of said retractor substantially encloses said working channel and said at least one wall member of said lighting element extends about at least 50 percent of said inner wall surface.

40. The instrument of claim 36, wherein said lighting element is movable axially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

41. The instrument of claim 36, wherein said lighting element is movable circumferentially along said inner wall surface while said at least one wall member maintains frictional engagement therewith.

42. The instrument of claim 36, wherein said at least one wall member includes a first wall member including a convexly curved surface positionable along said inner wall surface of

said retractor and a second wall member including a concavely curved wall surface opposite said convexly curved wall surface.

43. The instrument of claim 42, wherein said first and second wall members extend between opposite lateral edges.

44. The instrument of claim 43, wherein said first and second wall members extend along more than 50 percent of said inner wall surface between said opposite lateral edges.

45. The instrument of claim 36, wherein said retractor is a tube comprised of translucent plastic material.

46. A surgical instrument for accessing and illuminating a space within a body of a patient, comprising:

a retractor positionable with the body of the patient and including an inner wall surface defining a working channel therealong; and

a lighting element including a pair of wall members and at least one light transmitting element between said pair of wall members, said pair of wall members forming a concavely curved inner wall surface of said lighting element and an opposite convexly curved outer wall surface of said lighting element, said outer wall surface positionable along said inner wall surface of said retractor with said inner wall surface of said lighting element oriented toward said working channel.

47. The instrument of claim 46, wherein said pair of wall members extend between opposite lateral edges.

48. The instrument of claim 47, wherein said pair of wall members extend along more than 50 percent of said inner wall surface between said opposite lateral edges.

49. The instrument of claim 46, wherein said retractor is a tube comprised of translucent plastic material.

50. A surgical lighting instrument, comprising:
a lighting element including a pair of wall members and at least one light transmitting element between said pair of wall members, said pair of wall members forming a concavely curved inner wall surface of said lighting element and an opposite convexly curved outer wall surface of said lighting element, wall members being bendable to conform to a passage in which said lighting element is positioned.

51. The instrument of claim 50, wherein said pair of wall members extend between opposite lateral edges.

52. The instrument of claim 51, wherein said pair of wall members form a semi-circular shape between said opposite lateral edges.

53. The instrument of claim 50, wherein said at least one light transmitting element includes a plurality of light transmitting elements extending along and spaced between said pair of wall members.

54. The instrument of claim 53, wherein said plurality of light transmitting elements are positioned in a passage between said pair of wall members.